

## **Department Standards for Assessment and Approval of Families for Adoption**

The following standards apply to the assessment and approval of foster families or treatment foster care families as an adoption resource for a foster placed in their home who has subsequently become available for adoptive placement.

1. The Wisconsin family must have a home assessment or home assessment update completed by an authorized adoption agency with a positive recommendation within the past twelve months. The assessment or assessment update must contain a recommendation of the number and type of children appropriate for placement in the family. The approval must be for one or more foster child who was previously placed in that home for temporary foster care and who has subsequently become legally freed for adoption. The assessment or assessment update must be signed by the agency staff person who completed or approved the assessment and the supervisor of that staff person.
2. The home assessment shall include findings of contacts with the Wisconsin Criminal Justice Information System and the local county social/human service agency regarding each adult living in the household.
3. The assessment should include a history of all previous applications for adoption and their outcomes as well as a history of involvement in child care as foster parents, day care providers and/or employment with child care providers.
4. All assessments shall include results of contacts with at least three personal references, with at least two statements of reference in writing.
5. All assessments shall document the number and dates of interviews held with all family members and the date(s) of at least one visit made to the home during the assessment.
6. Each assessment shall include thorough documentation of the following:
  - Assurance that HSS 56, Foster Home Care for Children requirements are met, including thorough documentation of any exception made to the rule, such as an exception to allow over eight children in the household.
  - Description of each child in the home, including their behavior, capacity to protect themselves, and their special physical, health, behavioral, educational and social needs.
  - Evidence of medical examinations of all persons in the household within the past year, documentation of any health problems of family members, needed precautions or treatment and discussion regarding the effect on plans for adoption.
  - Thorough description of the functioning of all adult caretakers including their level of emotional and behavioral adaptation, their social, medical and mental health history, marital relationships and social relationships.
  - Thorough description of each adult caretaker's specific parenting practices
  - Complete demographic information about the family including economic resources, employment, the house and adjacent property and the neighborhood.
  - Family functioning information such as interaction and communication patterns of the

family unit and relationships with extended family members.

- Examination of how each adult caretaker views birth parents who relinquish their children, their understanding and attitude about maltreatment of children, including physical and sexual abuse, and how they view children available for adoption and related issues such as separation and attachment.
  - Description of the motivation for adoption, the level of preparedness and commitment for adoption of all family members and a description of additional needed training or experience before a child can be placed.
  - Evidence that the adult caretakers are knowledgeable about the special needs of children they propose to adopt, such as medical, educational and behavioral needs.
  - A review of available supportive resources in the community and the potential the family has to seek out and use agency and community resources.
7. The Wisconsin placing agency shall be prepared to license the home and assure that the family will not accept placement of any other children until arrangements have been established for an authorized adoption agency to make placement plans, carry out the proposed placement, provide supervision and perform record keeping and post adoption responsibilities.